

GOOD AFTERNOON, THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTRODUCTION...

I WANT TO THANK THE GREATER KENDALL ASSOCIATION FOR INVITING ME TO BE HERE WITH ALL OF YOU THIS AFTERNOON.

LET ME BEGIN BY RECOGNIZING THE CHAIRMAN OF YOUR BOARD LUIS PETERS AND VICECHAIR MIGUEL LOPEZ, THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, DEAR FRIENDS...

IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE HERE WITH YOU THIS AFTERNOON TO BRIEFLY SHARE SOME THOUGHTS ON MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S GOALS AND ON HOW WE CAN ALL CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD A WORLD-CLASS COMMUNITY.

I FIRST RAN FOR MAYOR OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY NEARLY FOUR YEARS AGO BECAUSE I HAD A VISION OF WHAT OUR COMMUNITY COULD BE. I WANTED TO LEAVE MY THREE CHILDREN AND FIVE GRANDCHILDREN WITH A BETTER MIAMI-DADE COUNTY - A WORLD CLASS COMMUNITY THAT WE CAN ALL BE PROUD OF.

ALTHOUGH WE STILL HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO DO, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WE ARE WELL ON OUR WAY. I TRULY BELIEVE THAT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS REPRESENTATIVE OF WHAT OTHER MAJOR METROPOLITAN AREAS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES WILL LOOK AND FEEL LIKE OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS.

AS SOME OF YOU MAY ALREADY KNOW, WE FACED SEVERAL FINANCIAL CHALLENGES OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS, BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HAS TURNED THE CORNER.

ON THE JOBS FRONT, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HAS ADDED 112,000 NEW PRIVATE SECTOR JOBS SINCE THE RECOVERY BEGAN. OUR COUNTY LED THE STATE - WHICH IS NOW THE 3RD MOST POPULOUS IN THE COUNTRY - IN JOB CREATION.

MANY OF OUR RESIDENTS ARE REJOINING THE WORKFORCE AND MORE BUSINESSES ARE HIRING AND INVESTING HERE AGAIN.

SOME OF THE BEST NEWS WE HAD TO START THE YEAR WAS THE FACT THAT THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY DROPPED TO PRE-RECESSION LEVELS IN FEBRUARY.

WHEN I WAS FIRST ELECTED MAYOR IN THE SUMMER OF 2011, THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE WAS AT ABOUT 12 PERCENT. TODAY, THE RATE IS AT ABOUT 6 PERCENT.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE LANDSCAPE OF OUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY IS MUCH DIFFERENT THAN IT WAS AS LITTLE AS 10 YEARS AGO AND MIAMI-DADE COUNTY WILL CONTINUE TO CHANGE.

AMONG THE AREAS WHERE WE EXPECT THE BIGGEST GROWTH OVER THE NEXT DECADE IS IN AS OUR LARGEST “CITY” – THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF THE COUNTY – HOME TO APPROXIMATELY 1.1 MILLION OF OUR RESIDENTS.

AS YOU KNOW, DUE TO THIS ENORMOUS GROWTH WE NOW CONSIDER WEST KENDALL AND EAST KENDALL AS THE GREATER KENDALL AREA.

IN FACT, GREATER KENDALL IS THE FASTEST GROWING RESIDENTIAL AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN THE COUNTY, WITH A POPULATION OF MORE THAN 300,000. OVER 5,000 BUSINESSES AND 45,000 EMPLOYEES.

TODAY, WE ALL WORK TO BE THE PLACE THAT CREATES THE JOBS OF TOMORROW.

BUT IN TODAY'S WORLD, WE NEED TO TRAIN THE WORKERS THAT WILL FILL THE JOBS MOST OF YOU IN THIS ROOM CAN OFFER.

THAT IS WHY IN DECEMBER, WE LAUNCHED THE "EMPLOY MIAMI-DADE" INITIATIVE.

"EMPLOY MIAMI-DADE" PROVIDES JOB TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO THOSE RESIDENTS IN AREAS WITH HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT RATES.

AS I MENTIONED, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IS 6 PERCENT. TOO MANY IN OUR COMMUNITY HAVE NOT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE IN OUR OVERALL ECONOMIC PROSPERITY.

THAT IS WHY "EMPLOY MIAMI-DADE" IS SO IMPORTANT AND WHY IT IS MY TOP PRIORITY FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND CRIME IN LIBERTY CITY AND OVERTOWN SHOULDN'T ONLY BE A CONCERN FOR RESIDENTS OF THOSE AREAS. IT SHOULD ALSO CONCERN OUR RESIDENTS IN KENDALL AND MIAMI BEACH AND THROUGHOUT ALL OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

TO DATE, MORE THAN 850 RESIDENTS HAVE ENROLLED IN THE FIRST TRAINING CLASSES, AND MANY HAVE ALREADY SECURED EMPLOYMENT.

ALTHOUGH THE INITIAL FOCUS OF EMPLOY MIAMI-DADE IS THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, SUBSEQUENT PHASES WILL AIM TO INCREASE TRAINING IN OTHER INDUSTRIES SUCH AS THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY.

I KNOW MANY OF YOU IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR LOOK TO HIRE A LOCAL WORKFORCE INSTEAD OF IMPORTING LABOR FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE STATE OR EVEN THE COUNTRY, AND THAT IS WHAT I WANT FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

THESE ARE OUR NEIGHBORS, OUR FRIENDS, OUR RESIDENTS, AND I BELIEVE OUR WORKFORCE SHOULD RESEMBLE OUR COMMUNITY.

“EMPLOY MIAMI-DADE” USES FEDERAL, STATE AND PRIVATE SECTOR DOLLARS TO FUND ACTIVITIES AND PROVIDE STIPENDS TO PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS WHILE THEY ARE IN TRAINING.

GOVERNMENT CAN HELP SET FAVORABLE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND EVEN TRAIN AND

EDUCATE RESIDENTS WHO WANT TO WORK, BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP!

ALL OF YOU IN THIS ROOM CAN DO WHAT CAREERSOURCE SOUTH FLORIDA, THE NEIGHBORS AND NEIGHBORS ASSOCIATION, AND THE ASSOCIATED BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS HAVE DONE.

WE NEED YOUR ACTIVE PARTNERSHIP IN HELPING MIAMI-DADE COUNTY GROW AND PROSPER.

SO LET'S CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER!

ALTHOUGH THE JOB GROWTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WE ARE EXPERIENCING IS WONDERFUL, I ALSO BELIEVE THAT IMPROVING OUR MOBILITY OPTIONS IS INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT, ESPECIALLY OUT IN WHAT COMMISSIONER JUAN ZAPATA REFERS TO AS "THE WEST."

HOWEVER, THERE IS NO SILVER BULLET THAT WILL SOLVE OUR TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES HERE IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

MY ADMINISTRATION HAS WORKED DILIGENTLY TO IDENTIFY WAYS TO REDUCE CONGESTION ON OUR

ROADWAYS; MAINTAIN, IMPROVE, AND EXPAND OUR TRANSIT AND MOBILITY OPTIONS; AND INCORPORATE FEDERAL AND STATE RESOURCES, AS WELL AS THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO ADDRESS CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS.

I CALL IT THE “LASAGNA METHOD” BECAUSE THERE ARE MULTIPLE LAYERS OF RESOURCES THAT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY CAN TAP INTO IN ORDER TO SOLVE CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS.

MY VISION IS TO ONE DAY BE ABLE TO EXPAND COMMUTER RAIL -- WHETHER IT'D BE METRORAIL, TRI-RAIL OR ANOTHER SERVICE - TO THE DENSELY POPULATED WESTERN SUBURBS AND UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

MANY OF OUR RESIDENTS SIT HOURS IN TRAFFIC ON A DAILY BASIS WHILE COMMUTING BETWEEN THEIR HOMES, AND AS YOU CAN RELATE, THAT IS PRECIOUS TIME THAT COULD BE BETTER SPENT WITH YOUR FAMILIES.

IF WE TAKE A TRULY GLOBAL VIEW AND MAKE A COMMITMENT TO WORK TOGETHER ACROSS THE COUNTY WITH PARTNERS IN THE STATE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR, I KNOW WE WILL ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES.

ANOTHER GROWING AREA IN OUR COUNTY IS THE TECHNOLOGY SECTOR. THIS WEEKEND WE ARE HOSTING THE SECOND ANNUAL EMERGE AMERICAS CONFERENCE AT THE MIAMI CONVENTION CENTER FROM MAY 1-5 TO WHICH YOU ARE ALL INVITED.

LAST YEAR THEY HAD AN ATTENDANCE OF 6,000 PARTICIPANTS AND THIS YEAR WE EXPECT AROUND 10,000 AS THEY HAVE PARTNERED WITH NBC UNIVERSAL.

THIS IS A SUMMIT THAT WILL GATHER THE BRIGHTEST INNOVATORS, MAYORS AND BUSINESS-PEOPLE TO CONTINUE POSITIONING MIAMI AS A HUB FOR TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION.

I KNOW FOR A FACT TECHNOLOGY IS KEY TO THE FUTURE OF HOW OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT WILL OPERATE. IT WILL EVEN HELP US REDUCE TRAFFIC ON OUR ROADWAYS AND PROTECT OUR NEIGHBORHOODS.

OVER TWO YEARS AGO – WELL BEFORE EVENTS IN FERGUSON AND BALTIMORE – I ASKED OUR MIAMI-DADE POLICE DIRECTOR JD PATTERSON TO STUDY THE POTENTIAL USE OF BODY CAMERAS ON OUR POLICE OFFICERS.

BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT BODY CAMERAS WILL HELP ENHANCE TRUST BETWEEN POLICE OFFICERS AND THE COMMUNITY THEY SERVE. THE COUNTY COMMISSION APPROVED MY REQUEST FOR \$1 MILLION FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE FIRST 500 BODY CAMERAS AND WE ARE MOVING FORWARD WITH FINALIZING GOVERNING POLICY.

STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT POLICE BODY CAMERAS REDUCE COMPLAINTS AGAINST OFFICERS AND RAISE THE LEVEL OF TRUST BETWEEN RESIDENTS AND OUR OFFICERS.

THERE ARE OTHER AREAS THAT MY ADMINISTRATION IS LOOKING TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE SERVICES, SUCH AS STREAMLINING OUR PERMITTING PROCESS. I KNOW THAT WILL BE WELCOME NEWS TO BUSINESS OWNERS.

IN CLOSING I WANT TO SAY THAT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY WOULD NOT BE THE FINE PLACE THAT IT IS TODAY TO LIVE, LEARN, WORK AND INVEST WITHOUT THE CONTRIBUTIONS THAT EACH OF YOU HAVE MADE.

IN ALL THAT WE DO, OUR COMMON GOAL IS TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL MIAMI-DADE COUNTY RESIDENTS.

WE ARE GOING BEYOND CITY LIMITS, WORKING TOGETHER.

AND THE INCREDIBLE GROWTH THAT WE SEE ALL AROUND US IS MADE POSSIBLE BY ORGANIZATIONS LIKE YOURS... AND FROM THE HARD WORK AND DEDICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN IN THIS ROOM.

I ENCOURAGE YOU TO WORK WITH US TO CONTINUE MAKING MIAMI-DADE COUNTY THE WORLD-CLASS COMMUNITY WE ALL WANT TO PASS ON TO OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN.

IF THERE IS ANY WAY WE CAN MAKE YOUR WORK EASIER – WHETHER IT’S PERMITTING, CUTTING RED-TAPE, OR ANYTHING ELSE -- LET US KNOW.

MY OFFICE IS ALWAYS OPEN TO NEW IDEAS AND FEEDBACK FROM THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE OUT THERE EVERY DAY MAKING OUR COMMUNITY A BETTER PLACE.

IF THERE IS ANY WAY WE CAN MAKE YOUR WORK EASIER -- LET US KNOW.

ALL OF YOU HAVE A PARTNER IN COUNTY HALL.

ON BEHALF OF THE 2.6 MILLION RESIDENTS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY LET ME THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN...

GOD BLESS YOU ALL AND MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!

NOW WE CAN OPEN IT UP FOR QUESTIONS THAT YOU MAY HAVE...

